

"Cheer"

BY
ANNIE MARION MACLEAN

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“CHEERO!”

BY

ANNIE MARION MacLEAN

AUTHOR OF “WAGE EARNING WOMEN” AND
“WOMEN WORKERS AND SOCIETY”

ILLUSTRATED BY
C. R. WEED



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TO
HADDON, JOHN AND GORDON

PREFACE

IN the publication of these whimsical fragments from the story of an illness, my friend Jane asks leniency from the "gentle reader" on the ground that most of the story was told while she was still struggling with pain and the medical profession behind hospital bars. She herself finds foolishness the spice of life, and she hopes there are others of the same mind.

She wishes here to extend thanks to all the friends and doctors and nurses who helped her in the great rheumatic drives. But she wishes particularly to thank the members of her family for their constant care and loving kindness.

ANNIE MARION MACLEAN.

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I

CAMPAIGNING FOR CURES

THIS is a war story that is different. That is what every one thinks about his, likewise her story. But we know ours is! The heroine here is no spectacular figure in the annals of Mars. She is no Hippolita romping through the pages of mythical lore, no vengeful Boadicea riding in wrath to slay the invader, no sweet-faced Jael, nail in hand waiting for Sisera, no Maid of Saragossa, no Jessie of Lucknow, no Beebe Beam, not even a Tommywaac. But she is a fighter nevertheless, and she longs for a cessation of hostilities. This is a story of a woman who went as a private into the trenches to fight a disease which invaded her robust body without warning. She was many times engaged in deadly combat, but managed to emerge in one piece without victory. She returned from these excursions into No Man's Land with hope in her heart and no hate. It therefore seems worth while to tell her story for the help, or at least the entertainment

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of others, who have been or may be caught in the clutches of disease and the medical profession.

It should be explained here that Jane, the heroine of the story, is my dearest friend, my affinity, if you will, whom I am privileged to love and to hate till death us do part. I am, therefore, in a position to know intimately the facts of the story of her struggle here presented, and can vouch for their authenticity.

Jane was always the healthiest of spinsters, and could ill afford the long period of warfare decreed by the heartless Fates; but having survived, she is anxious to place intrenchments along the way for those who follow. But to the story.

Jane fell ill one day in winter, in the gay and festive Sodom. The attack was as sudden as it was disconcerting. To be stricken down in the midst of health and strength must always be a hardship. To Jane it was a calamity. She was a busy worker in the world, and had many irons in the fire, too many in fact for one person to handle in an eight or even a sixteen-hour day. But irons or no irons, she was laid low, and this is a tale of the diagnosis and treatment, or mistreatment, of her disease. The effort to get well carried her to Gomorrah, and away to the Babylonian nation.

The diagnosis *per se* was simple, for he—or she—who limps and screams may read the signs of rheumatism. The cook read Jane’s for her the first day, when she proclaimed, “It’s rheumatiz you’ve got, and you’ll never get over it. The doctors can’t help you.” This

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news was not cheerful, but the cook was, which was fortunate for the afflicted one.

However, despite the cook's dictum, Jane followed the custom of her community, and called in a doctor recommended by some officious neighbor, her own family physician being, as she often said, a veterinary, since her family consisted of a valuable dog. Thus it was that Jane fell into the hands of Dr. A. who verified colored Dinah's diagnosis, but not her pessimistic view of his profession. He inquired minutely into Jane's ancestral vices and personal habits. She informed him concerning the latter, but was hazy about the scandalous conduct of her forbears.

Having satisfied himself as to her condition, by this searching investigation, he removed his spectacles, and bade her go and sin no more in the way of eating meat, drinking coffee, tea or anything else that was not buttermilk. After signing his pledge of abstinence, she continued to grow worse, and called in Dr. B., whose chief claim to consideration was that he had been in practice forty years. He compounded medicines dark and dangerous looking, and prescribed these together with the use of red flannel externally applied. He prohibited all the meats that are commonly served, but permitted others, such as elk, moose and yak, in moderation. His medication made Jane so ill that she had to send for Dr. C. He, too, accepted the cook's diagnosis without further examination. Later he went into some scandalmongery among the ancients, but as this did not prove a prolific field, he summed up the

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situation thus: "Many people have rheumatism. Avoid draughts, eat sparingly, and take this prescription till you are nearly dead. Ten dollars, please."

Dr. D. was called in to save Jane from the effects of Dr. C.'s ministrations. He opined that the trouble belonged to the general class of diseases known to the unsuspecting public as rheumatism, but it should be differentiated as chronic rheumatism, and be treated by much dosing with nauseating drugs, by much rubbing with unpleasant oils, by much bathing in water strong with bicarbonate of soda, and by little eating of any food designed to sustain life. He intimated that rheumatism became chronic when the victim had consulted more than one doctor.

Dr. D.'s treatment made life more of a burden than ever to Jane. Her friends became alarmed, and began to recommend their own and their neighbor's physicians, and the various cures that were successful with Tom, Dick and Harry, not to mention Grace, Mary and Ann. Packages and bottles came till they strained the capacity of the garbage can, and prescriptions and addresses till waste-baskets overflowed. In the meantime, Jane suffered and grew weak from rheumatism, chronic rheumatism, articular rheumatism, inflammatory rheumatism and gout, according to the doctors who happened to be in charge.

In spite of this burden of disease, and plethora of doctors, she always expected to be well in a day or two, and, therefore, did not enter extensively upon the "cures" recommended by friends. Indeed, it would

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take at least one life-time to give them all a faithful trial.

It is to this period that she dates her moral downfall, for she says it was then she began to perjure herself when placed on the witness stand by her kind friends, and made to testify as to the virtues of this or that preparation. She was no longer free; she was pursued relentlessly by those who would cure her.

It was about this time that she consulted Dr. E. of wide reputation for gruffness, and some for skill in his profession. He took issue, in words at least, with Dinah, and pronounced the disease gout, prescribed a strict non-meat diet, much dosage, two Turkish baths a week, and told the patient to return in one month. Had she persisted in the treatment, it is clear that she could not have returned in one month, if at all. Jane was becoming helpless, and as her sprightly interest in getting cured was waning, she took stock of herself thus:

Sick five weeks, consulted five doctors, insulted twenty friends, lost ten pounds in weight and several hundred dollars in cash, pain greatly increased, inflammation not allayed, nights sleepless, appetite practically gone, ancestor worship an impossibility (all ancestors were under suspicion in the medical world, it seemed); outlook on the whole not satisfactory.

This situation brought Jane abruptly to the end of the first period in her disease, that in which any doctor merely because he (or she) happened to be a doctor was consulted, and his advice followed until she

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became worse. Then she passed on to another of the same type, only to become still worse, just as Dinah thought. The unintelligent period she called it, that is, when she herself was not intelligent on the subject (it was obvious the doctors were not), and not seriously agitated over her own condition. It marks the time when she drank and drank and drank, not pleasant and stimulating drinks, oh! no, but alkaline waters that cured Jack, and buttermilk that restored Jill; when she swallowed nameless medicines the doctors ordered; when she was rubbed and slapped and bathed *ad nauseam*, and when the pains increased *ad infinitum*. She says that is a closed book in her rheumatic experiences, and is put away on memory's shelf marked Vol. 1, Aa to Ee, like any other volume in an encyclopedia.

Jane now became obsessed with the idea that intelligent knowledge on her part was essential to a well-regulated cure, and she began haunting libraries by telephone, or by proxy, as the disease permitted, in quest of the desired information. She read much and learned little. According to some so-called authorities, rheumatism is of fifty-seven varieties; most of which are best treated by exercise of the Christian virtues, and abstinence from meats, and, if cared for in this way, are guaranteed not to outlast the individual afflicted. Others again recognize another variety which is ordinarily cured by six weeks, six months, or six years in bed, the Fates alone know which.

Then there were those who divided the disease

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into chronic and not-chronic, but like the "T. M." and "T. M." labels on the old woman's pies, it was hard to tell "'tis mince" from "'tain't mince." She found also discussions of curable and incurable kinds, but these seemed to merge somewhere on the road to incurability. Stray articles in leading medical journals led to the belief that here and there some doctors were seeking causes and related cures, but on the whole Jane gathered that while rheumatism had pestered man since before the time of Christ, crippling alike naked savages in South Sea isles, fur-clad Eskimos near frozen seas, and denizens of temperate zones, nothing worth while was known about it, that is, nothing more than Dinah knew.

Jane was now a sadder and a wiser woman, and started forth anew to seek more enlightened medical aid. The result of this was her introduction to springs and baths and change of climate as saving possibilities. As Doctors F. and G. were of one opinion in regard to the efficacy of these, the late winter found Jane journeying to the outposts of Babylon in search of healing waters. It was a well-beaten path, for thousands had been there before her, and thousands are still following with hope in their hearts and money in their purses. They are liable to lose both commodities if they remain long.

The Springs doctor was a new type to Jane and afforded her much amusement. She encountered Dr. H. and Dr. I. They were alike in their method of entering in their books the name, age, address, marital

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state, previous condition of servitude, and much gossip of a personal nature. This must have been taken for its mental effect on the patient, or doctor, or both, for it was not referred to again, and could not in any way influence the prescription, which was the same in all cases regardless of age, sex, marital woes, or non-marital bliss. The Springs doctor is there, for a consideration, to stimulate an interest in water externally and internally applied—for a consideration—regardless of sectarian bias. Methodists and Baptists alike were immersed in overflowing tubs.

It was in this Babylonian camp that Jane first heard the "You will be worse before you are better" theory, promulgated as though it were a biblical doctrine by all satraps, from doctors to bath attendants and bell boys. Part of it is true, and as sure as death and taxes, "you will be worse" all right. If you are courageous enough to go home before it is eternally too late, you may be better in time.

At the Springs, there was one god besides Water and his name was Diet. The physicians gave dietaries plain, and dietaries fancy, according to their taste, but it was all very complicated, inasmuch as the hotel menus were composed of the proscribed articles. The diet list of Dr. I. was a neat little booklet with gilt edges, the gilding for which was doubtless obtained from the gold bricks lying around. It was all so exciting that Jane returned to Sodom and again sought relief within its walls. She trusted her fortunes to Dr. J. this time, and in justice to him, it must

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be said that he never betrayed the trust. He knew more than all the rest, which of course is not saying a great deal; but he was honest, and lifted the veil of mystery from his drugs, calling them by name openly; and he expressed his distrust in diets as a curative measure, recommending instead good food and plenty of it, and a few weeks of complete rest in a hospital.

Now any one who has had any hospital experience knows that the rest to be obtained is a negligible quantity, but the unsuspecting Jane went, and for five weeks endured noises and smells such as she had never met before, and all in the hope of getting rid of pain. There, besides Dr. J., she was cared for by Dr. K. and Dr. L., and nurses who persisted in waking her up at night to see if she was asleep. She got no better.

Her next move was a thousand miles across the plains to test the virtues of hot mud. Here she was interviewed by Dr. M. and his assistant Dr. N., both of whom assured her that three weeks' treatment would restore her health, and here she heard again the "You will be worse, before you are better" theory. It should be "You will be worse, but you won't be better." Jane had four weeks of baths every day including Sundays, and was so reduced that she had to remain several weeks more to gain sufficient strength to leave.

Now baths are all right in their place and Jane would be the last to dispute their therapeutic value.

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She is eager to have laws passed compelling hoboes and pacifists for example, to be summarily bathed, or even ducked at high water, but at the same time she would have laws enacted to protect the rheumatic from a like fate.

The doctor whose name was not mud, but should have been, told her that of course the baths would not help her unless she had absolute faith in them, to which she retorted that if faith were the curative element, why might she not sit under a tree and imagine she was being cured. Ten barrels of mud externally, and two gallons of water internally applied daily left small space for the exercise of faith. Because she would not remain longer, her disease was now diagnosed as arthritis deformans, and pronounced incurable, just as Dinah had said, but not so cheerfully. Dr. M. offered this diagnosis unsolicited late at night, and he pictured graphically the horrors of a permanently crippled condition. Jane faced his announcement with outward calm, whereupon he said: "By Jove! but you have good nerve!" to which she replied: "It's nothing to yours."

A month without medical treatment followed this experience. In other words she "took the cure for the cure" and got better and then worse and better again, as any innocent bystander could have told her she would. The autumn found Jane in Sodom again, pursuing a giddy round of treatments. She was boiled and broiled, baked, roasted and stung, not to mention soaked. Dr. O., who supervised these so-called thera-

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peutic processes, named her disease gouty rheumatism, and put the blame on food and ancestors. The ancestors being dead and unable to defend themselves, nothing could be done about them, but he proposed to punish Jane for the liberties he assumed she had taken with food by putting her on a diet which was so remarkable that she quoted it in full.

Breakfast—An apple.

Dinner—Spinach, creamed onions, milk.

Supper—Water.

Dr. O. gave it as his judgment that this treatment would soon end not only rheumatism, but Jane as well; therefore she did not undertake it, feeling that life with rheumatism was better perhaps than no life at all without it.

This marks the close of the second period of seeking cures. Jane says it did not differ from the first particularly, except that she was subjected to greater physical indignities, and spent a great deal of time and more money. She was still cheerful, but losing weight rapidly, a circumstance in and of itself to be desired, inasmuch as it gave her the fashionable figure. This, however was not a matter of great moment, since the poor thing was obliged to stay in bed most of the time.

Dr. P. now took charge of the case, assured the patient that he could cure her shortly, and then proceeded to diagnose the case. When he found a brother medicus had called it gouty rheumatism, he laughed in scorn, and said any one with half an eye could

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see that it was rheumatic gout. His method of treatment, he said, was different from that of all other doctors; he always cured, whereas they always failed. He discoursed at length upon his skill, and read testimonials by the half-dozen just as the regular quacks do. Jane was quite impressed, and finally asked, "What is the treatment?" to which he at once responded: "Ten dollars a call, and I must see you a thousand times," or words to that effect. Poor Jane had to be revived, for she is rather guileless in the matter of business and always trusts to the future for revelations as to cost. This excursion on the sea of pure (or impure) medical science reduced her bank account by two hundred dollars. For some days she was too ill to offer effective protest.

After this she found and clung to Dr. Q. with tenacity. He looked wise, and besides, the dog liked him, while he distrusted Dr. P. This counted with Jane for she has long maintained that her setter's judgment of men is unfailing, and now she is willing to add that he can be trusted better than the neighbors to select a physician. Dr. Q. took the patient in hand, pronounced her disease arthritis and in short order haled her to the hospital. He did not impeach her ancestors or cast aspersions on her own lack of sobriety. He did not inquire into the exact amount of coffee or meat she had been in the habit of consuming each day. He went scavenging for germs. Jane felt better already.

Ever since she started on her wild orgy of illness,

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she had been made to feel that her family was under the ban, and she herself a pariah of some sort whom God Almighty was chastising. Poor Jane, whose ancestors were so good they were uninteresting, and who never knew the difference between a cocktail and a guinea hen, had always led an upright life without trying! But the doctors had insisted that there was an hereditary taint, and on that account rheumatism ran in families. She said no one but a medical brother could make such a mistake as that, for we all know that rheumatism can not run anywhere; it is mostly confined to wheel-chairs. But here was cheer. Instead of harboring hereditary viciousness, her body had been burglarized by bugs, when her guns were not loaded. They had moved in, in fact, and were occupying the citadel, and Dr. Q. set out to rout them. As assistants in the hospital, he had Drs. R. and S.

The weeks rolled into months and still the fight went on. Jane grew worse and better and worse again, and then other illustrious members of the brotherhood of physicians were called in consultation. Dr. T. came first with much blare of trumpets, and, after subjecting the patient to many indignities, pronounced hers an aggravated case of infectious arthritis. It now became clear that the more expensive doctors eschewed the term rheumatism, and sought to bewilder the sufferer, not to mention the sufferer's friends, with a more scientific phraseology, but it did not seem to lessen the pain. Jane had now to her credit fifty-

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seven, or was it fifty-eight, varieties of rheumatism, arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, arthritis deformans, and infectious arthritis. But whether the tune was arthritis plain or arthritis fancy, it was a dirge to Jane.

After giving his diagnosis, Dr. T. opined that the victim would get well, thus differing from Dinah, but he did not reveal how or when or where. Jane valued his opinion highly, but as it did not make her better, the conscientious Dr. Q. called in another notable, Dr. U., for consultation. His fame was great as was evidenced by a detached look and a heavy watch chain. Jane was duly impressed, but not awed. While engaged in sinking his fists into various parts of her anatomy, he addressed her as Mrs. Blank, Mrs. Blink and Mrs. Blunk in turn. Now Jane could endure the blankety-blank succession of cognomens, but the Mrs. never, for, as she often asserts she has fought and bled to maintain her spinsterhood, a fact attested by the graves of importunate swains kept green in her imagination. Peace without victory was finally restored in the sick chamber. But Jane had her fighting gloves on, and when he said, with a return to his detached look and an air of finality, "You have infectious arthritis, I could tell you all about this. I wrote an article on it once," she said, "Go ahead. I am more intelligent than I look." He gasped "God forbid!" and departed muttering, "What manner of woman is this!"

Jane had her days enlivened by these specialists of

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great reputation, but she decided it was like aviation, a rich man's sport, and not to be indulged in by the impecunious.

The weeks of misery dragged on, and Jane had about concluded that the best she could hope for was to reduce rheumatism as the Englishman in Africa reduced his malaria, from the level of a disease to that of a beastly nuisance. She was getting very tired and quite helpless now, despite the consultations and vigorous treatment. The hunt for germs had gone on with all the zest and much of the uncertainty of a hunt for the "man higher up" in a Federal investigation. She was inoculated with germs living and germs dead, germs respectable and germs the reverse, but always counted by the million or billion, until she felt like an oil magnate—that is, she did until she remembered her bank account. One great advantage of this treatment was that it furnished a lively interest, and that, even some doctors know, is of the greatest value to a sick person. Jane commenced betting on the outcome. It was disease *versus* the cure, with odds always in favor of the cure. She was a hopeful creature in those days. Her friends often wondered that she did not become depressed; but she got fun out of what she called her researches into the medical profession. She was a student by nature and by training, and therefore studied doctors while they studied her, and often to their confusion. While they tried suggestion on her, she tried it on them. If doctors can "suggest" to patients that they get well, why should

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patients not "suggest" to doctors that they cure them? But as this did not seem to work either way, Jane finally left the hospital, down, but not quite out, and fighting still. Dinah's "You'll never get over it" kept ringing in her ears.



II

ON WITH THE FIGHT

AFTER the diverse experiences through which she had passed, Jane felt that she had run the whole gamut of cures, and her next move should be to some quiet retreat where she could think it all over. This seemed a commonplace enough undertaking, but the putting it into practice carried with it numerous complications, all full of zest for Jane. She finally selected a sanitarium less than a day's march from Sodom, and one of her relatives, imported for the occasion, undertook to convey the party thither. The party consisted of the dog, a trained nurse—the dog was trained, too—and the invalid. The frenzied relative asserted then, and maintains to this day, that the invalid gave her the least anxiety. The nurse did not like the seclusion of the drawing room, with the mercury at ninety, while the dog did not like the exclusion of the baggage car, so they both took speaking parts; and, as was said before, they were trained.

Jane now entered upon another stage of her rheumatic career—that in which she had to be carried from place to place.

She made her exit from Sodom in the arms of

two robust sons of Ham, and she never looked back, thus avoiding a saline ending. The sanitarium experience would have been depressing to any one but Jane. She saw humor in it all, even in the pompous Dr. V., who had a naïve notion that avoirdupois would pass for mentality. He glibly dubbed Jane's prize affliction rheumatism. In vain she argued with him, taking the position that after all she had passed through she was entitled to a less plebeian diagnosis. But he was adamant, and assured her that static electricity would render her knees so nimble that she would be running all over town in a few weeks. Said he in essence: "Fie! on the Wise Men in the East, they know not what they say, much less what they do." Jane tried his static electricity and found it about as effective as a poultice of static sociology. But then what could be expected of the man who had diagnosed the Irish Setter as an English Bull!

Jane grew sicker every week, and her temperature kept climbing. With each fresh attack, she got a new diagnosis, until she accumulated a collection of about six different diseases in addition to the original one, and they were caused by anything that happened to occur to the diagnostician at the moment, and for each and all of them the same treatment was prescribed. Still, she felt that, owing to a kind and overruling Providence, she did not get enough to hurt her, because something always got out of gear. The electric machine was on a rampage one day, and the doctor the next. The latter cataclysmic performance

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was never explained; the former was always ascribed to the weather.

Jane found it passing strange that the elements should be held responsible for so many untoward events. Meteorological phenomena as a cause, or at least a promoter of rheumatism had been suggested to her from the beginning. It was part of Dinah's belief, accepted as an illuminating explanation by sympathizing friends, and surreptitiously advanced by most doctors. What could be simpler? Rheumatism is; rain is; therefore damp weather causes rheumatism! Moreover, it is a tolerably safe assumption since it is always raining, has rained, or is going to rain in Jane's world.

Treatment was now banished from Jane's program, and she gave herself up to plans for a further campaign. She was not yet ready to accept the edict of permanent disability. It is true she had already heard of nine hundred and ninety-nine "cases" just like hers that were either mouldering in their graves, lying helpless in beds, or sitting helpless in wheel-chairs, but this did not stimulate resignation to a like fate on her part. "Surely," said Jane, "some detective agency or bureau of research exists which can find the hiding place of the wise man who can cure my disease, for such a one lives somewhere."

She finally learned, with the aid a few amateur sleuths, that in Gomorrah there lived a doctor, whose skill was heralded even in Macedonia, who was giving the lie to Dinah's statement. This was exhilarating news, and preparations were at once made for the

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journey. Now Jane had vowed when she entered the retreat that she would not leave till she could walk away, but what are vows between a woman and her pet affliction? So she went off gaily, hanging on the neck of an Irishman, but stoutly maintaining that her next move would be made on her own feet or there would be no next one. She said afterwards that though she had taken that position, no doubt the future would witness her migration from Gomorrah with arms tightly clasped about a Swede! Jane is nothing if not adaptable.

The journey was eventful, but without fatalities, and at its end, Jane found herself again within hospital walls, and in the care of the renowned Dr. W., his internes, Drs. 1, 2, 3 and 4; his assistants, Drs. X. and Y.; his understudy, Dr. W.; his co-operating specialist, Dr. Z., with his internes, Drs. 5, 6, and 7, and Dr. &., with his internes, Drs. 8 and 9. These appeared in the arena gradually; they were not all lined up to meet her. If they had been, undoubtedly she would at once have sought the shelter of the strong-limbed Swede her imagination had pictured the day before.

Here they took the history of her case, not the history of her life, and she was not made to blench before that awful question, "Of what did your mother's great-grandfather die?" and its twin sister, "What diseases were prevalent in your father's family before the deluge?" or "What did you eat for Thanksgiving dinner the first twenty-one years of your life, and what

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did you drink on the Ides of March, the ten succeeding years?" Jane breathed easier now. This was true democracy, the kind for which the medical world must be made safe. One's body stood, or fell, on its own merits, and not on the habits of its ancestors. Another point scored for environment; another blow struck at heredity. Dr. W. and his associates differed from their predecessors in that they embarked upon a search for cause before they commenced to treat the disease, which Dr. W. diagnosed as arthritis with or without adjectival characterization. These were days of real sport for Jane. She was now a rheumatism fan, she said. She had been batted out as a player, but no one could stop her from pursuing the game (or the game from pursuing her). Jane had learned much about the foibles of the medical profession during her laboratory course in experimental rheumatism, henceforth to be known as arthritis, and, therefore, was prepared to meet the requirements in the hospital in Gomorrah. She had learned that a good patient is an optimist; and that an optimist is one who has faith in his doctor. That is clear enough, though, for one must needs be an optimist to have faith in his doctor! She also learned that brains are considered an undesirable asset in a patient, and, in fact, the doctors usually go on the assumption that patients have none. At any rate, when sickness comes one's mind should be removed, like one's back hair, and put carefully away in case of future need. It is patent to all that no patient

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should essay even a thinking part in the tragedy (or is it comedy) being played.

Jane knew all this, but nevertheless she became actively interested in the fight now well under way. Her body was prone, but her mind was alert, not tucked away in a bureau drawer. They bandied new words about, they cut, they scraped, they drew blood and tears in quest of the "focus of infection"; they trained field glasses and microscopes on jungle beasts and infinitesimal organisms; they raced and chased after the Cocci knaves, said to be related to the Assyrian who came down like a wolf on the fold. "I'll get that staphylococcus," said one; "You catch the pneumococcus," said another; while a third called out, "I've caught the streptococcus, and it is viridans." "Hurrah! Hurrah!" they yelled in glee, "We'll grow a culture, and make a vaccine now." The excitement was intense. Poor Jane grew delirious, with disease, not with joy, while the treatment went on. She was punctured with needles big and needles small, until the sight of a hypodermic syringe made her shudder. Vaccine and serum vied with each other to pay her homage.

Meanwhile she grew worse and worse and worse and worse, but her interest in the game never flagged. It was win the war or die with her. They all talked freely about her leucocytes, and watched eagerly for news of her opsonic index. And through it all Dr. W. seemed to know what he was doing, and did it systematically. But Jane did grow worse for weeks, and

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weeks, and weeks, and then she got better, for many weeks that followed just as they expect one to do at the Springs. It suddenly dawned upon her that she was no longer better; her disease was cured. The floodgates of joy were open. The news went out to all.

They had stabbed her, and speared her, and cheered her, until she was immune. Then they stretched her, and rounded her, and flattened her, and broke her bones, but not her spirit, and imprisoned her in plaster casts. They gave her opiates and permission to be profane, but never once did they hint that "the Almighty had it in for her" as others had done. It is so much simpler to charge things up to Jehovah than to seek an immediate cause. But that was not the way of the bold brigands who slew her germs. They used their brains to better purpose.

These were trying times for Jane. Her disease was routed, but she herself had been nearly put to flight; or to change the figure, her old tenant, arthritis, had moved out, but her new self had not yet moved in. Getting sick, she maintains, is easy, but getting well is no coward's task. It would be simpler to crawl away to die like a heathen than to work like a stevedore to get well. Yet she says, after all, there is no question but that it is better "to be" than "not to be."

Many things made the struggle hard for Jane. We must admit it would have rent a weaker heart to stay in bed when the suffragists were parading from Dan to Beersheba. She was such a fine parader before she

suffered from diagnosis! But even sorrow like this could not keep a militant soul down. The next we knew, Scutari fell, and Jane got up and walked. It is not definitely known that there was any connection between the two. But she remembers hearing that rain and rheumatic pains follow one another, hence in the other case also, *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. However this may be, Jane's first halting step, taken with the help of two strong crutches and a brawny male, was as wildly exciting to her as an unexpurgated tango to the jaded Sodomite. She dreamed of Marathons.

Getting well proved quite as interesting as getting her disease cured, and bade fair to take a much longer time. Jane, even in her most painful moments, had always referred to her disease as something apart from herself, as though it were a lodger, in fact, and not a member of the family. And a most undesirable lodger it was, for it left the house in a deplorable condition; but the injuries were not irreparable. Dr. W. and company were unusually fine decorators and repairers. A little upholstering here; a little bloom of health there; a little pulling here, and a little patting there, made a new woman of Jane.

She was contented now. She got her disease diagnosed and cured, and she herself, she hoped, would be as well as ever in a few years. We supposed of course that she would now devote her time to an advocacy of the extermination of the medical profession, on the ground that it was a public—also a private—nuisance. This had been her pet reform. As

On with the Fight

a less radical, and perhaps more attainable measure, she had openly urged the amendment of the game laws to provide an open season for doctors, when patients could seek redress without becoming liable on a charge of manslaughter. She had hoped to get this inserted in the platform of the Aggressive party, but in the days of platform construction, she was too weak to push it in.

“What is Jane doing now?” you ask. Oh, she is writing letters to all the rheumatics she ever heard of, urging them to try her doctor. Jane is so inconsistent. It must be the weather!



III

WITHIN HOSPITAL WALLS

HOSPITALS are interesting places to Jane because they are filled with human beings and, paradoxical as it may appear, she says even stupid human beings are interesting. There are the permanents and the transients, the former, especially if they are convalescing, have a proprietary interest in everything, while they regard the people who pass in and out as part and parcel of the family. Many members of the ailing fraternity are afraid of hospitals, and shun them as they would a plague, but when Jane had a hospital sentence thrust upon her, she accepted it gaily, and now she is willing to discourse upon her early experiences which covered more than a year.

People say that hospitals, like sanitariums, are of two kinds, the one you are in, and the other kind. The latter are always the best. But since one cannot comfortably change hospitals as he can hotels, he has to remain where Fate puts him, for a time at least. Jane's experience took her to two of the best in Sodom and Gomorrah. What would have become of her if she had been incarcerated in a miserable place in Nineveh, she hates to imagine. With hospitals as with doctors, the best are none too good.

"Cheero!"

Hospital number one is big and old and rich, with tradition skulking in the corners. The fact that it is rich, however, does not cause it to give rebates to private patients, but rather to mulct them of their hard-earned or hard-stolen or hard-inherited wealth. From five to ten or more dollars a day is the price of board and lodging, except for the hundreds who are herded together in the big public part, and pay nothing at all or only a small sum.

Jane found herself on the eighth floor far above the din of city streets marked "Quiet Zone." It was here that she was treated or mistreated or ill-treated, for four months. It was here she was visited and revisited by scores and scores of friends and acquaintances. Prior to this, Jane's personal experience with hospitals was limited to the dog hospital whither she went on occasions to have her setter washed. That seemed an entertaining enough place, for, as soon as they entered, the dog pounced upon a cat, and then for a time the atmosphere looked like a cubist painting. But finally she rescued her dog and somebody else rescued the cat, and things were as they were before.

This, however, was poor preparation for a sojourn in a human or even an inhuman hospital. Nothing so exciting as a cat and dog encounter ever took place there. The only encounter Jane met was between the cabbie and door man who nearly came to blows about the trunk. However, this peril was averted by a judicious distribution of silver coins, and the sick one

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entered, and was made to give up several of the carefully guarded secrets of her own life and of her ancestors, not to mention the name of her nearest male relative. She filled the dog's name in the last-mentioned blank, hoping that the secretary would seek an interview!

Hospital number two was big and fairly young, and rich, and there were no traditions skulking in the corners—only nurses and their beaux. The rates charged were high enough to make a hotel-keeper rich, and a patron poor. As Jane looks back now, she says it must be the noisiest spot on earth. It seemed as if street cars and elevated trains circled round and round the buildings, while steam radiators and elevators and employes added to the confusion within. When there was nothing else to disturb the patient, and she was thinking of a possible sleep, window washers with their ladders and belts and buckets arrived to contribute their quota to the day's din. But after all a hospital is not a grave, so why maintain a death-like calm just to satisfy a lot of unreasonable sick people? The first thing that Jane learned was that the hush in hospital halls is pure and simple myth. The attending physicians are the noisiest of all, then come the visitors—that is, other patients' visitors—and between times, the nurses can always be relied on to keep up the din. On the whole, though, a hospital is not so noisy as a railway station or a foundry.

Hospital administration always entertained Jane.

"Cheero!"

She would lie in bed and listen to the patter of the nurses' feet through the corridor, and wonder why a little scientific management could not be used to save the wear and tear on all concerned. But it seems to be a part of the training that these young women should rush madly along in the discharge of their duties, waiting on patients in breathless haste, as if they were telegraph boys delivering messages. In imagination they see the eagle eye of some one to be feared, watching them, as they pursue their frantic course of giving scant attention to patients. But after all, they are very human despite their seeming inhumanity.

Jane, being quite ill and disabled, needed special nurses all the time, and had a good many owing to her migrations and long sojourns in hospitals and other places. They were capable young women with the usual whims and virtues of womankind. They were a good-natured lot, too, and that pleased Jane since she can forgive almost anything but ill-temper. Laughter and fun she says are the best antidotes for disease that she knows; and with these, even a hospital sentence can be endured with equanimity. A buoyant nurse is worth her weight in gold, but a gloomy one is a bitter dose.

At one time, Jane had much entertainment figuring out an elaborate plan for substituting automatic electrical devices for nurses, in order to relieve those young creatures for more interesting work than taking care of sick people day and night. It could be arranged, she thought, to push a button once and have a glass of

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water patrol the bed; twice, and a dose of aspirin come up; thrice, and an extra blanket spread its soft surface over her; four times, and a soporific appear; five times, and a cup of soup jauntily spill itself over the patient; six times, and a record intone: "Anything I can do for you? Lie still and go to sleep now," and so on to the end of the chapter.

There are possibilities here, we must admit, but Jane never promoted the scheme, for she knew the substitution would be dreary for internes. Imagine them having to give whispered instructions to a steam derrick! A young blonde is so much more receptive.

But one cannot blame Jane for much speculation about such matters when she served a whole year's sentence behind hospital bars. One has to think about something, and the less thought about doctors the better. Neither can one say, "eni, meni, mini, mo" all day.

Jane liked all her nurses, but she wanted to be well enough to take care of herself. Nurses as well as patients have their imperfections, and when all concerned realize this, life together is one grand sweet song.

It is not the ideal existence, however, to be helpless and cared for by a succession of young women. To lie in bed and be fed is bad enough, but to have spoons of soup poised in the air, while the nurse is lost in thought, or deftly overturned on one's bosom while the feeder has her eyes on the West Front, takes the meal out of the ranks of light comedy, and

“Cheero!”

makes it a tragic performance. To have one's face washed by hands that move up when they should move down, and *vice versa*, and one's painful digits handled as if they belonged to a champion wrestler, is hard to bear with equanimity. It seems that some nurses give a bath as if the victim were a wooden Indian, instead of a mass of quivering nerves, sore muscles, and aching bones. Yet they try to be considerate. Jane has come to the conclusion that it never was intended that one human being should be cared for by another in such fashion. People should stay well or die.

Jane had her trials in the hospital because her affliction is one that everybody knows something about, and about which nobody knows anything, therefore, every one took an indulgent interest in her progress or retrogression. Her disease, as she has told in preceding pages, was rheumatism, not of the plain, ordinary garden variety as afterward became evident, but a rare exotic known as arthritis. The last named term is passed unheeded by the average citizen, and treated with silent contempt by others. Its use is merely a medical ruse to conceal incapacity, they think.

After Jane was settled down to hospital routine, she endeavored to get what pleasure she could out of her disease and her surroundings. It might seem difficult to some to get much enjoyment out of the former, since pain kept her at the screaming point most of the time, but her risibilities were occasionally roused by her own condition, and her surroundings always

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proved interesting. She often chafed under a cruel Fate that consigned her to rheumatism instead of to some fashionable malady. Others reveled in goiter and gall stones, appendicitis and peritonitis and even neuritis, not to mention endocarditis. But rheumatism! Every nurse in the hospital had a grandfather or at least an aunt who had it. Poor Jane was humbled in the dust for she well knew that a recital of her plebeian ills would not be tolerated in polite or even impolite society. The hospital officials conveyed this impression, indirectly of course, but nevertheless unmistakably. What satisfaction, indeed, is there in spending the precious moments of one's life in a hospital without being able to boast about it afterward?

But after all, the Fates were kind to Jane in that they permitted her, during her hospital sojourn, to have three operations. Had she remained longer, doubtless she would have had more to her credit, for whenever there was a slack time among the carvers, they turned their eyes greedily on her. There is something so distinctive about an operation that it should be enjoyed by every one who can raise the money. Of course the more organs one can have removed, the more lasting its glory. But even if one cannot achieve a laparotomy, a mere tonsillectomy gives a feeling of superiority that, like virtue, is its own reward. But when Jane found that it is only in complete anaesthetization that one can hope to become a participant in organ recitals, she entered into that state with a

"Cheero!"

feeling of exaltation, knowing full well that even her plebeian rheumatism had done her that good turn. X-ray pictures had been taken and revealed the fact that she could never walk again, even though her arthritis was cured, unless she submitted to an operation on her bent and twisted knees. Thus did her opportunity come to her. One bright morning—it was a gala though breakfastless day for Jane—a squad of internes trundled her off on a cart to a room where sat the Lord High Executioner waiting for his prey. Just before she reached Nirvana, a sepulchral tone demanded, "Have you any loose teeth?" "Not yet," said Jane, and then passed into Lethe.

When she came to, she was in her room encased in about ten pounds of plaster casts, and vigorously setting her dog on the doctors. Thus did she emerge from unconsciousness while a woman across the hall came back to life calling for her husband whom she insisted "was a good man, next to God," while two doors down, a man half full of ether was confiding to the world that he liked his divorced wife better than the one of his bosom.

And who says hospitals are dull?

There is no sport known to man—not to mention woman—as exciting as getting a disease cured. The chances for recovery are slim even though one's purse is fat. It is always an uneven contest with the patient on one side, the hospital and doctors on the other. Still if the patient has good nerve, he may win.

In addition to her operations, Jane had the some-

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what unusual experience of going down to the Pearly Gates, but not quite through them. It was a case of the cure being worse than the disease. Those were the days when one's faith was pinned to serums and vaccines, and Jane's great adventure came with the sixth injection of a serum that was to make her well. The doctor came to her room in the hospital, and gave it to her, as usual, hypodermically in the back. This time he did not break a needle, but perhaps he went into a blood vessel. She said that in a minute or two, as the pain after the stab was passing, the room became vague, blurred, black. An intense itching spread over the body, herald of a scarlet urticaria. Queer, gasping breaths escaped her lips. All of this transpired in the twinkling of an eye. The doctor's quick mind grasped the situation and he quietly summoned aid. The "reaction" at its worst was soon upon Jane. Nurses came nervously running through the corridor, internes at hand dropped in, as though casually, while hurry calls were sent for older and wiser men.

The symptoms of anaphylaxis multiplied, and she lay panting on the bed. Windows and doors were thrown open and fans were pressed into service. She was pulled up and then down again as respiration became more difficult. She said she felt the tingle of hypodermic antidotes first in one arm, and then in the other. Cups were pressed to her lips. Then all was a blur again, and she heard only hurrying feet

"Cheero!"

as though in the far distance, in a world from which she was passing. Then all was silence. . . .

Again through eyes red and bleary, peering through a swollen countenance, she said she dimly discerned five doctors and three nurses. But the world was not a real place. It was plain she was dying. The doctors thought so, but they did not cease their efforts. One said, "She is unconscious," and for a brief moment it was true. But the hurrying heels of a messenger, bearing a pulmotor, broke in upon oblivion, and she meekly asked, "What is that?" First one and then another replied, "Nothing for you." It was for her, but it mattered not then. Jane was wandering in the borderland, unable to formulate a request. Yes, she was dying. . . . But she said she had no regrets, no fears. She was glad the young doctors had a chance to gain valuable experience. She was glad the little nurse at the foot of the bed, looking out of tear-dimmed eyes, was seeing an "interesting case." She wondered if the lesson she was giving that day would help others in fighting the terrible disease from which she suffered. Then all was in the past tense. Breath stopped again. The heart ceased to beat. She was on a boundless sea, calm and cool. She was sinking, sinking when she caught the life line again. This time she saw vaguely, kind, sad faces and competent hands. A cup was once more put to her lips. Feebly she sipped. "Make her drink it," said one. "Don't allow her to go to sleep," said another.

Jane was soon back on shore again, a returned

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voyager from a strange country. The borderland between life and death had been explored, and there was no vision of the future, no sweeping panorama of the events of the past. It was a commonplace journey, quickly enough accomplished, but carrying with it disastrous consequences. Chills and fever tugged at her life again. She did not want to have chills. She wanted to talk,—talk about serum reaction, and the scientific value of her experience. A French scientist was awarded the Nobel prize for writing about anaphylaxis. Could she not be allowed feeble mutterings while experiencing the condition? Would they get the phagocytic count now? Perhaps the serum was of no avail. Did one in ten thousand die from serum reaction? Was the sacrifice of that one worth while? These things Jane questioned plaintively. It was so hard to make herself speak, but it was so important to try.

A tall doctor bade her keep quiet, and with gentle hands himself spread a blanket over her. His manner was soothing; his wisdom convincing.

Daylight passed into darkness; watchers departed; friends came and went; sobs were quickly stifled; and, as the night was turning into day, she slept. In the morning the battle with pain would go on.

A little episode, as the world reckons such things, but of mighty import to Jane. Life will be more mysterious than ever for the experience. She had no regrets, no recriminations.

If she had gone beyond recall? Jane says it would

"Cheero!"

still be well. All life is vicariously lived. That is the glory of it, and its justification.

But whether one lives or dies, Jane says the most cheerful souls about a hospital are the young doctors. They are always kind and sympathetic, and vitally interested in their work. Whether in Sodom or Gomorrah this is true, and Jane has pleasant memories of them, and insists that if ever she gets sick again, she will send for them all to a man, and feel perfectly safe in their hands. Thus has her once proud spirit been broken by hospital routine, and she is ready to swear fealty to a band of young medics who go about with one eye on business and the other on the pantry.

But attending specialists, nurses, internes, and window washers did not make up the hospital for Jane. There were her fellow prisoners as well, who came and went like fireflies over a summer meadow, while she stayed on and on. There was the old woman whose marital partner sickened and died while she was there, and they feared to tell her for some weeks, thinking she might have some sentiment in regard to him who had been the husband of her bosom for fifty years. When they did tell her, her very practical inquiry was, "How much money did he leave?" Then there was the neighbor who visited Jane, and related graphically the whole story of her recent operation, omitting no details, and had just started in on one she underwent twenty-six years before, when an extramural visitor cut her short to tell about some floating

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kidneys of her own. For poor Jane, it was almost a case of "out of the jaws of death into the mouth of hell."

Then there were the sad cases that enlisted Jane's sympathy. She was much better at that time and was interested in all that pertained to her fellow sojourners in the hospital. She related many stories of this period, but asked particularly that I tell the one about the leukemia case.

This patient was a long, lank, ill-favored son of the soil, and with him came his bright young bride with a mass of copper-colored hair. They were accompanied by his parents, plain, old-fashioned folk who got acquainted with Jane very soon, and told her the story. The son was ill, but they did not know how seriously, when he was married. The week before they had put a mortgage on the farm, and brought him to the big city to consult the Great Doctor whom, the mother said, "could raise people from the dead." She expected a miracle. "Lazarus was raised," she said, "and Jairus' daughter," and they were not loved more than her son. Thus the simple mother with the sad soul kept encouraging herself. She and the father watched faithfully, and the girl with the copper-colored hair nursed lovingly while the tide of life ebbed away.

Many leukemia cases came in, but it was only a question of time till they went out to another world, and Jane knew that her young friend would go that way, too. One who tarries long in a hospital learns

"Cheero!"

many things about those who come and go. Life and death seem mere catchwords, and the tragedies of individual cases are frequently forgotten. Where dying is a business, Jane says, the stress of sorrow is sometimes overlooked, but she could not forget the agony in the room down the hall. "So much to live for," the mother said, "with planting time coming on, and later the harvest." The bride said little, but her step became less elastic, and hope was dying in her eyes.

One day Jane learned that the poor sick soul was struggling with the body, and they feared an attempt at self-destruction. To prevent this, a grating was placed in the window, an insult to poor overwrought nerves. Lukemia was bad enough, but gratings were worse, he said, and the girl-wife was in despair. The sick man raved about the hills and meadows and brooks, the doctors and medicine and hospitals. His wan, white face grew whiter and his hands less certain. It was evident that gloom, like a salt sea fog was settling down upon the father and mother. "If the Great Doctor were only here," they muttered—and while they spoke, the Great Physician was hovering near for the case had gone to Him.

One day he felt better, and, smiling weakly, said he would get well if he could go home, and lie on the grass with his head on spring violets, and his feet on the jonquils. He did not want the shining sheets, he wanted only green pastures. Jane heard of this, and by a strange coincidence that same day

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some friends brought her a great basket of violets picked by themselves in the beautiful country fields. She carried them down the hall and gave them to the girl-wife with the breaking heart. The husband clutched at them eagerly, strewed them over his pillow and buried his head in the purple fragrance. Then, smiling feebly, he crushed some into her hands, and sighed contentedly. Later he fell asleep murmuring of the fields and the flowers while the young wife sat beside the bed with her face on his pillow.

Morning with its restlessness came at last, and the sick man opened his eyes thinking only of violets and his bride. "More flowers," he cried. "It's like heaven here." He nestled again on his pillow of violets and clasped again the hands so dear to him, as he beckoned his parents to come nearer. Again he slept, first fitfully, they told Jane, while they counted the pulse beats, then more quietly and peacefully till he was at rest. Dreaming of the beautiful fields in spring-time, his spirit floated away, and the girl with the copper-colored hair sat weeping alone. And Jane was puzzled over many things.

Jane is a sociable soul, and enjoyed visitors of all kinds, even the ones who seemed to get religion and sickness mixed up, and whose conversation naturally drifted to the patient's chances for comfort in the remote future, where the wicked are said to cease from troubling—their neighbors probably—and the weary are at rest. If there is anything that tends to make membership in the heavenly choir attractive, it

is a hospital sentence. That in itself, without preaching should make a sick one involuntarily turn away from the world, the flesh, and the—doctors.

People who visit the sick naturally fall into two classes just as all other folk do—those who have sense and those who haven't. Jane has a few friends of the latter class, and they visited her frequently, always crushing her hand in a gorilla-like grasp, and then sitting where she could not see them except by wrenching her neck, when they would proceed to relate all the unpleasant things that had recently come within their ken. The others always slip in like a ray of sunshine, seat themselves in just the right place, and make the minutes fly with pleasant chit-chat. Fortunately for the world, these are in the majority, at least Jane says they are, and she ought to know, for during the four months she was in the Sodom hospital, she had a record of three hundred and eighteen visitors and only four threw her into fits.

Jane did not chafe under her long hospital residence, though she often said the sameness of it was enough to give one softening of the brain, if that feat had not already been accomplished by the treatment. However, she was able to entertain herself despite the fact that she boasts no ladylike accomplishments such as knitting or whatever it is that real ladies do when they are ill. Jane's fancy work was done with pencil on paper while she was in the hospital, and in this way she commemorated her cure, while she burned incense before the renowned doctor who turned

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her out into the cold, cold world, a woman bereft of her pet affliction, a mere wraith without rheumatism, but bearing up well under the loss.

With the promise of freedom ringing in her ears, she invoked the Muse to help her epitomize the story of her long hospital sojourn, and she produced the following, with due apologies to all concerned, as a souvenir for her fellow sufferers whom she hoped soon to leave:

CURING ARTHRITIS IN THE HOSPITAL IN GOMORRAH

"Who are the patients screaming so?" said Interne-on-Parade.

"It makes us mad; it makes us sad," the Special Nurses said.

"I think I know, I have it now," said Interne-on-Parade.

"Oh! tell us quick; it makes us sick," the Special Nurses said.

*They are treating the arthritics in a very modern way
By taking out their tonsils, scraping sinuses, and say,
'Twould make your heart stop beating quite, to hear
the sufferers pray,
When they're treating their arthritis in the morning.*

"It's sad to see the young and old," said Interne-on-Parade.

"Oh! yes, indeed, they're crippled so," the Special Nurses said.

"Cheero!"

"They've helpless been for many years," said Interne-on-Parade.

"But never more will that be so," the Special Nurses said.

No, no; oh! no, Doc Great Man's brain has driven out the pest.

*He calls in Dr. Tonsil, Dr. Stabber, and the rest;
Doctors Slave and Carver too; the Interne boys (no jest);*

They all help to treat arthritis in the morning.

"I'll tell you now, I'll tell you how," said Interne-on-Parade.

"Oh! tell us now, oh! tell us how," the Special Nurses said.

"A man as great as he can see," said Interne-on-Parade,

"That helping pain is man's great gain," the Special Nurses said.

So they're taking their opsonins, and are counting leucocytes;

They've made vaccines from cultures, and they've watched for phagocytes.

They're getting ready tubes of stuff (they'll need their nerve, all right),

For one stabs their backs with serum in the morning.

"Oh! my, Doc Great Man looks so glad," said Interne-on-Parade.

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"He knows they're well, but he won't tell," the Special Nurses said.

"He makes them stand, he makes them walk," said Interne-on-Parade.

"We'd love to see him start them out," the Special Nurses said.

Oh! he looks them in the eyes and cries, "Don't talk of pain, I say,

But step right out, relax, relax, don't know too much, I pray,

'Twill make you stronger now to hear, you'll shed your casts to-day."

And arthritics will be walking in the morning.

'Tis a pleasant thing to hear; they are all cheered up to-day,

For they saw their Doctor Great Man in the morning.

They are speechless now with joy, and can't sing more praise to-day,

But they'll crown him up in Heaven some fine morning.

After presenting this to Dr. Great Man, he hastily signed an order for her release, possibly on the ground that she was mentally unbalanced, though he was kind enough not to say so, and she went forth into the world offering a prayer that the hospital should know her no more forever.



IV

IN A WHEEL-CHAIR

ORDINARY people do not ordinarily ride in wheel-chairs after they are a few years old. They may ride in automobiles, street cars, on horses, or even hobbies, but outside of summer resorts and world's fairs, no mature person, unless seriously handicapped by nature—or art—would dream of tempting Fate in a wheel-chair. It is not a conveyance that has gained much popularity in the world of locomotion. It is an extra hazardous way of getting about, not so much because of the construction of the machine, as because of the construction of the mind of the operator. Yet a wheel-chair is a necessity in some otherwise well-regulated families—in Jane's, for instance.

For years Jane seemed to have a monopoly on health and strength. Then suddenly she was seized with the illness whose history I am recording, and went through a long siege of arthritis, doctoritis, and hospitalitis, a trio that deprived her of her powers of locomotion, when she finally found herself an occupant of a wheel-chair. It is the story of this occupancy that she has asked me to tell because she thinks it is worth while as an experience and because there are about a hun-

dred thousand other rheumatics or arthritics, as you please, in the country who are in them or ought to be.

The queerest thing about wheel-chair residence is the mental attitude of non-residents toward the occupant. They look on him indulgently as on a child, but they do not really take him seriously. If he does things that other people do, they are not allowed to pass as performances *per se*, but as performances in a *wheel-chair*. For instance, men are advertised as “wheel - chair preachers”; “wheel - chair singers”; “wheel-chair thieves”; and “wheel-chair bandits,” not merely as preachers, singers, thieves, and bandits. This in itself is disconcerting, for who would want to be mentioned as a one-eyed milliner, a knock-kneed broker, or a thumbless teacher?

Really to get the most out of life, wheel-chair invalids should be colonized in one fair spot where they could mingle unnoticed with the wheel-chair brigade. There it would be no confession of weakness to ride in a wicker contraption on wheels, only a sign of affluence. But the invalid wheel-chairer has no such sense of normality. *He* is queer, and *she* is queerer still.

Jane had her first experience in a wheel-chair when she spent some weeks at a spa seeking a cure, before she knew that the only people cured at spas are those who have no ailments anyway. There she was rolled around by bell boys who used the halls and verandas as speedways. They dashed frantically around corners and bumped into every possible post. It was

In a Wheel-Chair

wildly exciting, but somewhat disquieting to the nerves. If the object were to terrorize the patient into forgetting her original malady, it was accomplished. It was not only hazardous for those in chairs, but also for those on foot. The place resolved itself into a hunting-ground filled with pursuers and pursued. In those exciting days when destruction was imminent, Jane with an effort could jump to safety. Later, however, she was obliged to stick to the wreck, if wreck there was to be, but she never again trained on such a race course. Perhaps it was well that she had such discipline at the beginning of her career. It steeled her nerve for hardships yet to come.

Her next experience was in a sanitarium where she was recuperating from a four months' sojourn in a hospital. She was unable to walk at all, and when not in bed was in a rickety chair owned by the institution, and propelled by her own nurse. Getting about there was fraught with much discomfort, because the chair was too wide for most of the doors through which it had to pass, and it was only after a series of bumps for the chair and bruises for the rider that it was finally forced through. This made the day's travel somewhat perilous, as well as painful, and Jane's ejaculations uttered in self-preservation, were apparently regarded by onlookers as evidence of mental crippling. Now it is bad enough for an alert person to have crimps in her body without being adjudged imbecile. It seemed as if anybody in the vicinity of the chair felt called upon to answer simple

"Cheero!"

questions put to Jane, as though she of the feeble feet could not be expected to go through the mental gymnastics incident upon saying, "Yes, it does look like rain," or "No, thank you, I don't care for cod-fish." Or if any one broached a serious subject such as a duty on wood pulp, or a full dinner pail for the masses, her nearest neighbor would answer for her. Jane inwardly protested much over this, for it soothed her soul to hear talk of something besides nerves and stomach ulcers.

Just before the situation drove Jane insane, she wheeled her chair, figuratively speaking, to another quarter of the globe, and there the attitude toward her was different, but riding forth, an equally precarious pastime. Here, during a long hospital residence incident to getting her disease cured, she was lifted into a wheel-chair whenever her misery permitted, and thus had her days enlivened by the change.

As the months passed and it became evident that she was getting well, she was wheeled all over the hospital for recreation, and particularly enjoyed her afternoons in the sun-parlor with three men well along in years, and cherishing diseases of their own. They talked politics and pain, the emphasis on the former, with Jane a happy listener. Once one of the trio turned to her in the midst of tariff talk and asked indulgently, "What is your trouble?" When she replied, "rheumatism"—she was then aching in plaster casts—he said, "Humph, you're lucky," and plunged into a minute description of his abscess, and cursed

In a Wheel-Chair

the nurse and doctor for their bungling method of dressing it, and then passed on to politics. Jane gathered that the Democratic victory was responsible for it all till another veteran spoke up, and made it plain that without said victory they would all at that moment be blistering in the nether world. Jane of course, being a mere woman without a vote, was not expected to have any views, which made it pleasant for her.

It may seem passing strange that Jane who religiously wore a "Votes for Women" button should thus ally herself, on her afternoons out, with tyrant men instead of tyrant women. It happened thus. During about a thousand and one casual meetings with suffering members of her own sex, she found that talk turned to spring fashions, domestic problems, and pain, with emphasis on the pain, and, as there was no sex reticence to veil revolting details, they were set forth baldly *ad nauseam*, and Jane, though in a wheel-chair, could not get away till her nurse appeared. So her comrades became mere males in wheel-chairs of their own, an ill-assorted group—an ex-congressman, an ex-college president, and an ex-army officer. The first and last had horns and hoofs showing, and an odor of brimstone about, during arguments, while the second was always trying to preserve peace, knowing full well that our institutions could not thrive if the country's vested interests were attacked. And Jane would egg them on until four nurses would appear, and wheel the strange quar-

tette off to their various rooms with promises to meet again.

It may be mentioned in passing that Jane did not talk much about her sickness. She had principles against it, she said, but we all know it was because she could not get any one to listen to her, inasmuch as they were all pouring their woes into her ears. Later on, when she got more strength and had some use of her hands she could wheel her own chair a matter of a few feet when the din of disease discussion became unbearable. But keeping time with the rhythmic movements of her chair she could hear, "Yes, my wound discharges——" "Your incision was not as long as mine." "They aspirate my stomach twice——" "Oh! I've had those bismuth meals." "I stay in a wheel-chair because my back hurts me so," and "I fear I can never walk again." Jane vowed then and there that she would walk again, and away from the sounds of distress, and in time she did. Meanwhile she sought to forget her own ills and help others forget theirs. This was all in self-protection, and besides she was not drawn to pathological anatomy or physiological pathology for diversion. It was bad enough, she thought, to be in the grip of disease, and furnishing laboratory material for the medical profession without talking about it all the time.

At last there came a day when Jane bade farewell to hospitals, for a time at least, and wheeled away to other scenes, the proud owner of a pair of crutches,

In a Wheel-Chair

which means, of course, that she acquired a new art, much to her delight.

Heretofore Jane's wheeling had been done indoors or on verandas and roofs, now she entered into the second period, which included travel outdoors on highways and in parks. This was more exciting and likewise more dangerous, if the driver happened to be of the reckless variety. She came in touch at this time with the world of unknown but would-be sympathetic people who frequently stopped her progress to ask questions. "Why do you have to go in that chair?" or "Is it rheumatism?" or "Did you have a stroke?" quoth they. And "You look well, why can't you walk?" a practical person would inquire. Now, nobody—unless perhaps a policeman—ever stopped an automobilist to ask, "Why, looking hale, dost thou ride?" or halt an equestrienne to hint that the walking is good. But a chair is different; it is not for the adult sans question.

But on the whole, Jane says that people are kind even when they look sadly on as if to say, "You are not long for this world." And the one who ejaculated "poor thing" on passing meant well.

Jane found that the stronger the sex, the stronger the expletive, as, for example, the six-foot man who passed and exploded to his companion "It's a ——— shame for a woman to ride in a thing like that." His adjectival characterization of "shame" was of unwonted vigor, and Jane was glad that there were no

"Cheero!"

innocent children or doctors, not to mention nurses, around to hear it.

One day in the park, Jane was barricaded by books when a stranger passed and said: "Been that way long, lady? What are you reading?" Now Jane's literature included "African Game Trails" and "The New Freedom." The man looked startled when he saw the titles and passed on muttering "nobody home." She did not tell him that she carried them to block the wheels of her chariot when she wished to stop. The former kept it from progressing, while the latter kept it from retrogressing too far. But the dull man thought she was actually reading them, and believed it his duty to call the police. Some people have neither imagination nor humor. Such should never be permitted in or around wheel-chairs.

It was during this period that Jane read omnivorously. Reading was always a part of her professional business, and the mere reading of one book was never an event to her. It took a five-foot shelf a day to keep her busy as her distracted relatives who provided the literature discovered. Nothing less than a well-equipped, modern book-store would suffice, they thought, if she were confined to a wheel-chair for many months. Volumes on history, politics and law, sociology, economics and psychology were piled up around the house much to Jane's delight. It came near being her undoing. Casual acquaintances heard of her hunger for books, and came with offerings of their own choosing. One kind woman

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brought "Sonnets from the Portuguese" in padded leather. Jane's wrath—after the lady left—was magnificent. She said it was bad enough to have a disease dating back to antiquity without being suspected of having a mid-Victorian mind. "Hand me the 'Spoon River Anthology,'" she said; and wheeled into the sunshine.

But the ordinary exploits of Jane paled before her great undertaking which was an imaginary trip around the world. She planned her trip in all its details, and achieved a great success in taking her wheel-chair around the world, or rather having her wheel-chair take her. She and one of her relatives nearly came to blows on the subject of taking the dog. Jane wished to take him because she thought it would be such valuable experience for him. The disagreement was finally settled amicably by Jane taking the dog. Since the trip was to be leisurely, there would be ample time to arrange for passports for domestic animals. They started from Gomorrah westward, like the course of empire, and in due time arrived home in safety since the trip was made before the Hohenzollern ambition became an active menace to the world. Travel books and geographies are living creatures during a journey of this kind.

Jane had a wonderful time, saw the most desirable things in the most fascinating parts of the world, and had no trouble with luggage, for she was never out of her wheel-chair, except to sleep, and she was gone three months. She recommends this trip with

variations to suit the individual taste, to the whole wheel-chair fraternity. Airships and wireless telegraphy and giant steamships are all right in their place, but for the last word in luxurious round-the-world-travel appointments, Jane says, commend her to a wheel-chair and a lively imagination. Other people with brains more nimble than heels could take the grand tour, too, and carry memories more satisfying than those of continental *tables d'hôte*. Jane is very enthusiastic about such travel. She maintains that, for any disease, it is better than doctors and drugs, and not so costly. She says she was fêted by kings, porters, emperors, and suffragettes as her fancy dictated. She never had to look at a museum or a grave; never was jostled by her own or other people's countrymen; never had to lock up her wrath or her purse; and never grew purple in the face trying to make her wants known in an unknown tongue. She traveled ten or ten-hundred miles an hour as she pleased, and never ran into a privately conducted party or ran down the medical profession. This alone was a notable experience particularly since she personally investigated the thousand and one rheumatism cures and after-cures on the European continent.

Curing rheumatism at resorts seems to be one of the great industries of the world. How it has escaped the ban of the medical profession is one of the mysteries of the age when curing this or anything else by means of more or less secret formulæ has stirred the profession to the depths. Jane says the most

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satisfactory way to visit these resorts is to make an imaginary trip in a wheel-chair; and she should know since she has visited many in person as well as in spirit. She remembers particularly one place where the authorities got the human alimentary tract mixed up with the week's laundry, and administered large doses of ordinary washing soda. The vogue for this was great for some years. Still another place inadvertently exchanged the national pharmacopœia or the materia medica for a cook book, and used a recipe for tea biscuits instead of an indicated cure for rheumatism. Large dosage of bicarbonate of soda was the resulting treatment. Jane says imaginary wheel-chair visits are the best kind to make to such resorts, whether they are located at home or in alien lands. However, she wants it clearly understood that she is not leading any movement to put health resorts out of business, she only objects to their picking rheumatics for their prey. They should take bald-headed men for instance, or any other class able to play ball with the prescription, but to bait the helpless wheel-chair fraternity seems despicable. She wishes some one would write a manual on "Wheel-Chair Tactics" that would teach the occupants how to ward off such attacks. Something evidently is needed. Perhaps it is the development of class consciousness among the chair ridden. Yet it might be difficult to find invalids willing to consign themselves to a wheel-chair class. It would savor too much of an admission of defeat. Wheel-chair invalids always hope to be well some

"Cheero!"

day, and that makes them individualists rather than co-operative derelicts. This being the case, they will have to roll along according to their own sweet wills even if they do bump into "cures" once in a while.

Jane says a term in a wheel-chair is a liberal education. First there is the chair itself. There are almost as many makes as there are of automobiles, but there are seldom any new models. The first one was patented before the deluge, and used to carry the rheumatic sample into the ark. Others have been made since, but they do not show much improvement. Jane designed one, and had it built according to her own specifications in the face of great opposition on the part of the builder, who maintained at first that it could not be made because the like had not been made before. She called it her runabout, and got much pleasure out of it for a time. She later experimented with modifications on manufacturer's standard makes, and managed to get some comfort out of the various chairs. Reading wheel-chair catalogues is as diverting as reading fashion magazines, and not so exciting for an invalid.

After the chair itself come the accessories, a study of which develops many qualities, chief among which is credulity. A mere well person could never imagine what an unexplored field there is in wheel-chair equipment. It is a delight to roam therein. But Jane says the mortal mind that designed it all could never have tried to put it to personal use; it was only made to sell. Then, too, one can get a modicum of excite-

In a Wheel-Chair

ment from a chair. Once Jane was riding merrily along when a wheel came off, but a serious accident was averted. "Surely," she said, "this is the hectic life." It was as exciting as the time she was run over by another wheel-chair at a moving-picture show. She said she felt after that, that she needed outriders for protection. The time her chair almost turned over backwards, and she narrowly averted a broken neck, she said she felt the need of an anchor.

But the funniest thing of all was the escapade of old Dobbin, alias the old-clothes-man's horse when he sighted Jane at a crossing. He shied like a colt and raced driverless with distended nostrils down the street. All the urchins ran out; un-pedigreed curs assembled; and the army of alley cats hunched up its back collectively and individually; and it took a policeman to restore order. It was surely enough to make at least a professional mourner laugh. Since then Jane runs, figuratively speaking, at sight of a horse. The streets became a vast play-ground for Jane as she wheeled about in her chair. She was always an object of interest to children who could not understand so large a go-cart. "Are you a baby?" one said before his nurse got her hand over his mouth. Once a four-year old inquired, "Did you break your leg?" Upon Jane's negative reply, he stared hard with a puzzled look, but finally came back with, "Did you break both legs?"

Jane maintains that every street and alley becomes a Great White Way with its numerous attractions

"Cheero!"

when one rides forth in a wheel-chair. Dullness vanishes from life. Then, too, there is an element of danger which is just sufficient to keep one stimulated, and to give each ride an interest of its own.

Many social conventions are ignored when one rides abroad in a wheel-chair. Strange people speak in passing as they often do in the human and beautiful country, and Jane genially responds. There is one kind of stranger however, to whom Jane objects. It is the important person who breezes by with a stereotyped smile directed toward the invalid, as if to say "I'll let a little of my sunshine light up your dull life!" People who can walk about have no monopoly on sunshine. Another pest that one encounters in a wheel-chair is the distributor of tracts bearing "glad" messages. Jane says she can think her own "glad" thoughts. Real estate and grocery advertising, on the other hand, furnish entertainment, for, she says, she never has been able to think her own real estate and food thoughts.

Passing doctors usually give an interested and more or less proprietary glance at a wheel-chair occupant as if to say "kamerad." Jane always says that medical men are the best-natured creatures on earth, otherwise they would be in a wild frenzy of despair over their failures that stare at them on all sides. But the sight of ninety and nine wheel-chair patients on parade is more than compensated for by the one who recovered from measles. It is an enviable disposition to have, Jane thinks, and commends it to all of a pessi-

In a Wheel-Chair

mistic turn of mind. But a physician in a wheel-chair of his own is a pathetic sight. Jane says she has known two in this plight, and they were both shrouded in the deepest gloom, and indulged in hair-raising profanity. She explained this on the ground that they, better than laymen, knew the utter inefficiency of their own profession, and, therefore, were absolutely without hope. A little false hope is sometimes very encouraging, but taken as a regular diet it is debilitating. One does not need to be in a wheel-chair, however, to learn this; he who runs may read it.

Jane says that life in a wheel-chair is after all about what one makes it, just like life elsewhere, and any one with the desire may extract abundant joy from the passing days spent anywhere above ground.

Finally, after all her many experiences, Jane found that she no longer needed the wheel-chair except for days of "Auld Lang Syne," since she was so well and so strong that she could occupy the family chairs, and get about somewhat as normal mortals do. The kind Fates had commuted her sentence, and she rushed off gaily to make a figurative bonfire of all the trappings of invalidism before emerging into her old life again, a year or two behind the times. She says the journey was a long one, and very rough in places, but the scenery on the whole was good. Yet after all is said and done, wheel-chairs are very good if you only know how to manage them, and we must admit that Jane was master as well as mistress of hers.



V

THE SOCIAL WHIRL

GOING about again was a great joy to Jane. She was always a sociable creature and liked people better than anything else in the world, unless perhaps dogs. She always said her idea of a happy home was a place where the door-bell rang all day, and the dogs had to be pried off the sofa to make room for guests. Sickness, therefore, did not seem to be in her line at all—she only accepted it as a side line anyway, intending to discontinue it at an early date.

She was very happy to go about a little, even with such impedimenta as chairs and crutches. She went to a luncheon or two near home as a sort of preliminary skirmish before motoring off forty miles to spend the afternoon. That, indeed, was a triumph for her, particularly as the rain beat down on the return trip. The closed car kept her body perfectly dry, but her soul rejoiced in the wetness. She always loved a rainy day. Of course she was still tied to the apron-strings of the medical profession, and could not wander very far away. In fact she had not the strength to do much, but she was so thankful for small favors

"Cheero!"

that she put the rest of us, with our greater privileges, to shame.

But the great event was a first-night box party at the theatre, for Gomorrah was gay in those ante-war days when it was no shame to put on new clothes without a Red Cross button in sight. When you have not been out of the house after nightfall, except perhaps in an ambulance, for several years, it must be quite exciting to spin toward the Rialto, and bask in the bright lights. Jane found it so that eventful June night and was as gay as a lark when she got home toward midnight. She said it was a grand and glorious feeling to be out like a normal human being again. The drama presented on the stage was only part of the enjoyment for her. The newsboys on the street, the gamins at the windows, the trampers on the pavements, and the men and women everywhere made the evening a delight to her. She says no one who has not been imprisoned for a time can understand the joy of seeing many people moving around. Next to the pleasure of moving about oneself is that of seeing others moving. At least that is what Jane thinks, and she ought to know. She says no one who likes motion should ever be allowed to get mixed up with rheumatism, which doesn't move much except to tears.

After achieving a box party, Jane plunged madly into the social vortex. That is what she said. She went to two dinners, a highbrow luncheon, and a low-brow tea in three weeks. She who used to flit gaily from

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one social gathering to another as a relaxation from the serious work of life. But now even a little gaiety satisfied her, for she thought she was getting well. Pains and aches were with her still, but they would go away sometime she knew, and that thought kept her happy. Friends were very kind, too, and arranged many little pleasures for her. Even one of her quasi-foes in the medical profession invited her to a dinner at a well-known pleasure park within the confines of Gomorrah, and he never took her temperature or looked at her tongue during the evening, although he did order her home at nine o'clock while the other guests were allowed to remain for the dancing. Jane said she did not mind that at all, because she always thought a pair of crutches would be zero as a dancing-partner. While wooden heads seem to get on very well in the ball-room, wooden legs are a bit awkward. On this account, Jane went home willingly, after promising her host to write him a sonnet in memory of the occasion. She wrote an "Owed" because it was easier, and the medic did not know the difference anyway. The only feet he knows anything about are rheumatic, and he doesn't know much about those! He would send halting metrical feet to an orthopædic surgeon, and expect them to come tripping home in fine form. But he was satisfied, and asked her as a special favor to him to insert the lines here. She does this, trusting they will escape the eye of Alfred Noyes, or be drowned out by the strains of a barrel organ.

"Cheero!"

OWED TO A DOCTOR

*There's a band of music playing across the garden
wall*

In Gomorrah as the sun sinks low.

*The music is Teutonic,—'tis the cooks who make it
sweet,*

And entice the rabble there to flow.

*Aye, entice the highbrows, even medics from their
lair*

*To surround the bands of music playing loudly
half the night.*

And it won a reputation as they ambled in in pairs

To the tables with the soft subduing light.

One medic had a patient who tormented him by day

With her everlasting begging for a change,

Till he feared his amber locks were turning gray.

*Then he thought him of the gardens within range
And quickly planned a party for the shrew.*

In an ecstasy the patient said she'd go;

(He invited other friends, and family too.)

*She liked the doc's prescription, and frankly told
him so.*

One day the doctor helped her

Into his beauteous car,

And rushed her helter-skelter—

The ride was not so far—

Past all things, never asking pardon,

Straight to the Summer Garden,

Where, all dressed up in Sunday clothes,

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The ladies sat at table.

*The doctor from the menu chose
Such food—it seems a fable!*

*Ah! then the music caught the throng
With Wagnerian notes of praise,
But did not hold it very long,
The dressed-up, painted jays.*

*The doctor and his party laughed
In rapturous bliss exalted*

*And Wagner, Sousa (no not Seipp) they quaffed
And called for milk—not malted.*

*To gardens go in twilight time, in twilight time, in
twilight time,*

*To gardens go in twilight time (it isn't far from
drug stores).*

*And you shall stumble crutch in hand across this
lovely wonderland;*

*To gardens go in twilight time (it isn't far from
drug stores).*

*There's a band of music playing across the garden
wall*

*In Gomorrah as the sun sinks low;
Though the music's only Wagner, there's a cook to
make it sweet.*

*And enliven it with chowder, beer and meat.
The doctor and his party, they thought it quite a
treat,*

“Cheero!”

*To sit and calmly gaze about, removed from city
heat,
In the garden where the band plays on.*

*So it's doctor dear, and doctor seer,
What have we to say
When you give us food and cheer,
An eventful day?
All around your big, big head,
We'll tie a wreath of roses.
That is what they said,
Sure, I counted noses.
So take the wreath of roses while you may;
The guests are all in spirits gay,
And swear you're never made of clay.
(Hark! did you hear a bray?)*

*To gardens go in twilight time, in twilight time, in
twilight time,
To gardens go in twilight time (it isn't far from
drug stores).
And you shall stumble crutch in hand across this
lovely wonderland;
To gardens go in twilight time (it isn't far from
drug stores).*

The entertainment was voted a great success by all the participants, and its commemoration in song created some mirth. Jane says it does not take much to amuse adults; with children the situation is different. No

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child would be amused by a vaudeville performance, for instance, yet grown-ups will almost go into hysterics over the silliest antics on the stage, as for example when the star comes out, looks at a brother performer, then, with a wink at the audience, says confidentially "nobody home." Jane maintains that she got unlimited fun out of feebler efforts than this when she was associating with doctors and nurses in the hospital. This being the case, she says she is willing to add her quota to the day's foolishness by writing parodies or anything else the doctor orders.

Jane said she felt quite like a *débutante* during those exciting days when she was going into "society" again, and everybody took an interest in entertaining her. The most pleasurable thing about an illness, she says, is getting over it, coming out as it were. But we all felt that it was not going out among people again, as much as being able to do some work that kept Jane's spirits up during the trying months of convalescence. She wrote much those days, and tried to rehabilitate herself in the world of occupational interest. Her medical directors prohibited work, including reading, except light literature, which only shows what poor psychologists they were. Jane says light literature makes her light-headed and heavy-hearted, and as she saw no reason for bringing about those anatomical changes in herself, she refused to indulge. Sociological treatises would bring some of us to the breaking point, not so Jane, and the way-faring doctor though a fool should have discovered

"Cheero!"

this. However, it did not really matter since Jane took affairs into her own hands in prescribing and proscribing mental pabulum.

While in the social whirl, Jane made a two weeks' visit to a country house, and was like a "fresh air" child in her enjoyment of the beautiful outdoors. Yet places never mattered much to Jane, people seemed so much more important to her. This was fortunate, inasmuch as her disease did not make her very lively in getting about from place to place.

After her return to Gomorrah, Jane gave a party and bade all her friends come and drink tea. It was a festive occasion. It was all in the day's work for her friends, but it was an all-day work for Jane. Which only shows what a greedy thing is arthritis when it takes a strangle hold on a person's strength.

Once Jane went forth to a public banquet where twelve hundred working-women sat down to celebrate. She thought then that the mere fact that they were able to work was worth celebrating. That was the reason she promised to lift up her voice in public once more. She had had a long vacation from after-dinner speaking and was anxious to know if she could prattle acceptably. But she never knew because the morning papers devoted their space to her crutches! "Invalid Heroine of Banquet" they said. "Woman who had not walked for years got out of bed to attend. Carried on shoulders of girls!" This, and more, greeted Jane's astonished eyes. It was ever thus. Peculiarities stamp one indelibly. It is as hard,

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she maintains, to live down a sickness as it is to live down a prison sentence, and any one knows that is no sinecure. She had been lifted about by Irishmen and Swedes, but to be carried by wage-earning women on dress parade! Never! It sounded like a hazing story. Jane had talked of going on the Chautauqua Circuit, but the banquet seemed to take away the ambition. She said she feared her most impassioned utterances on "Teutonic Barbarities," for instance, would never get over the top. The papers would only report "Lady Orator lifted to Platform in Wheel-Chair." And the manufacturer of the chair would want his placard on the back. Or they would say, "Orator to-day just recovering from long conflict with the medical profession. She uses Bailey's safety crutch tips."

She decided that the advertising business offered a more promising field for her endeavor, but she has not yet entered it. Jane talked of the many things she would do when she recovered. She wanted to do something really exciting like putting on a three-ring circus or staging a great drama, but she wished to be a spectator or manager rather than an actor. She said she had already been a circus performer too long, having jumped at the snap of the doctors' whip for several years, only the jumping was mental instead of physical, rheumatism not being given to much jumping except from joint to joint.

This was the time in Jane's career that casual acquaintances used to ask her if the days seemed very

"Cheero!"

long. As if the days could ever seem long to an adult with an ounce of brains to rattle around in her skull! Jane says they have never been long to her since she was ten years old and it seemed an eternity from one Christmas to the next. But those were the days when a full stocking meant more to her than a full dinner pail to a Bolshevik.

Jane says we have talked enough about her petty social achievements. She does not wish to appear too elated over a few luncheons and dinners, and teas and plays and rides, and shopping tours and movies, lest some one might think she regards such things as the very stuff of life. She does not. She thinks useful work with its exhilaration and weariness, yes, and its monotony, the thing that is really worth while, and the longer she is disabled, the more eager she is to do some manual labor. In fact she says all labor is largely manual, and the proletariat is not far wrong in regarding it as the only kind worth considering. If you don't agree with her, have yourself bound hand and foot and see how much effective mental work you can do! But Jane enjoyed everything, and was duly thankful for the powers she had. She said she reminded herself of her baby nephew who after first casting an appraising eye over his breakfast tray, and seeing only cereal, piously closed his eyes, and said "Our Faaver, we sank you for good oatmeal. Amen." It may be more intelligent to pick and choose your joys, but it is easier to get your joys out of the things the Fates have picked and chosen

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for you. She is, therefore, satisfied with this brief account of her social exploits as well as with the exploits themselves.

It must be apparent to the innocent bystander as well as to the wayfaring man that Jane has endured much since she committed her first indiscretion by getting sick, and her second by trying to extract information concerning said sickness from the doctors. But she survived all this, and likewise the hospitals, and crawled back to seeming good health. She is now ready to forgive and forget. But before blotting the experience from her memory forever, she wishes me to assemble her fellow travelers at a farewell banquet, wheatless and meatless, where she can propose the following toasts:

Arthritis: "A friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

The Doctors: "Oh! wad some power the giftie gie us."

Her Family: "Faithful unto death."

Her Fellow Sufferers Everywhere: "For man is man and master of his fate."

Jane now closes the story of her convalescence with a few words from a language still used in medical prescriptions, though largely unintelligible to all concerned.

"Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit," which being interpreted—with necessary substitutions by the drug clerk—is:

"Cheero!"

*"For in the hereafter, methinks 'tis,
When we all have grown hoary with age,
We'll laugh over even arthritis,
And think of the doctors sans rage."*

And Jane, looking forward to a future in her busy world, called back to her fellow travelers, "Keep well, but if you get sick, keep happy."



VI

RELAPSES

JANE'S victory over her foe seems to have been just camouflage. At any rate, she was unable to make a durable peace, for hostilities have broken out from time to time since she announced her conquest, and each time she has lost some advantage she thought she had gained. She says her medical allies made a serious mistake. They interned the alien germs in her body instead of deporting them. They might have known that the streptococci crowd could not be trusted even in an internment camp. But medical men are so credulous where their own achievements are concerned! They formulate theories, and confuse them with facts. Jane says the profession of medicine is not a science; it is an art—a lost art. Doctors, however, are good sports. They will take a chance any time. But in this she says they are not more reckless than the clergy or teachers, the only difference being that the former take risks with the mortal body, while the latter only tamper with immortal souls. But, after all, doctors are advancing along many lines, with Jane's disease for instance. They can now produce it in guinea pigs.

"Cheero!"

Some of the more credulous medics, taking a leaf from the psycho-therapist's book, think that by looking very severe, and saying "scat" to a disease, and printing an article about it in a medical journal it will "scat." But Jane's wouldn't do that, and thereby hangs many a tale. Jane says that relapses may prove quite as interesting as the original illness if taken in the right spirit. There are always new remedies to be meditated upon, and, if one becomes quite vindictive, they may even be tried. The mind of man has never grown weary of inventing cures for rheumatism, and life can never be entirely dull while a vista of these cures opens out before the afflicted one. Neither can life be without hope, since they all offer health and vigor unreservedly. Now no sufferer can feel otherwise than cheerful when she knows that in the corner drug store stands a bottle that has cured unconditionally all the Smiths and Joneses on this side of the river Jordan. It gives a feeling of preparedness raised to the *n*th power. It is like a standing army to a country in dread of invasion. Jane says that relapses are not only interesting; they are broadening as well. And, moreover, they teach one to be modest and unassuming about announcing a complete restoration to health. Such announcement may be premature, like the Teutons' claim to a great naval victory in the battle of Jutland. Relapses teach one to back down gracefully, and anything that can make a rheumatic back up or down, gracefully or the other way, ought to be welcomed. Relapses also

Relapses

serve to make clear the essentials of content in life, and they show how little, after all, outward things and conditions have to do with a happy heart. One must take life as one finds it, in sickness as in health. Any other attitude savors of stupidity, from which crass sin Jane prays to be delivered.

All these things have been brought home to Jane during the last two years during which she has been speculating much upon her rise and fall, and trying to discover some satisfactory cause—the doctors' causes did not carry conviction with them. She says the war is probably responsible for her original slump which came upon her insidiously. It was enough to arrest any one's recovery to have the Germans march out to trample civilization in the dust. What self-respecting invalid could go on convalescing in the face of such a tragedy? Jane entered the struggle in spirit with Kitchener's First Hundred Thousand, and she went for the duration of the war. She is now back of the American Lines doing canteen work or something of the sort. But I anticipate.

Jane's interest in her disease has not been so keen since that first piratical act of Germany. She says her first desire is to wipe out Teuton greed, and after that arthritis. But we finally persuaded her to go on with the fight against her relapses as an initial measure in the greater struggle. Even Jane's enemies, if she has any, must admit that she went to the front again bravely and fought well to recover lost ground. She again served term after term in the

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hospital, more than a year in all; she had the same old doctors, and many new ones; she was cut and scraped, bathed and baked, as if these things had never been done before; and she went through it with all her old time zest. The doctors were very lenient in spite of the fact that she was a chronic case. It is a well-known fact that a doctor regards a chronic case as a chronic insult, and it is customary to pass the insult along to a brother physician. But Jane did not wish to be passed on. She feared she might go farther and fare worse. And, fortunately, Dr. Great Man knew that one recidivist more or less could not dim the brilliance of his reputation, therefore, he continued to supervise Jane. He pursued heroic measures too, and Jane was as heroic as the measures. He called in his brothers of the Knife, and they added operation after operation to her list. She says being gassed in Flanders could hold no terrors for her, after her experiences with anæsthetists.

After a time, as Jane concluded that she was relapsing along in too care-free a manner, she decided to ask the doctor to tell her definitely why she did not get well, and just what her trouble was. This was a hazardous proceeding since doctors do not think such matters are any concern of the patients. However, Dr. Great Man consented to waive the proprieties for once, and this is in effect what he said to Jane: "While we cannot speak with any degree of definiteness until after your autopsy, we can at least describe what seems to be your condition in a few simple

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words. Yours is a chronic arthritis due to pathogenic bacteria, probably a strain of the streptococcus viridans; the mode of infection is hematogenous and from a focal infection. The anatomical changes are due to endothelial proliferation or embolism in the small arteries. Your infection shows a tendency to fibrinoplastic exudate. Malnutrition in your case leads to secondary metabolic changes causing in their turn hyperplastic or atrophic changes in joints, tendons and muscles; thus showing clearly that you have both proliferative or hypertrophic and degenerative or atrophic arthritis. Chronic arthritis deformans due to a streptococcus invasion is often associated with chronic myositis, and it may be a peri-arthritis, a synovitis and osteo-arthritis or even a pan-arthritis. Indeed you may even have an osteomyelitis, involving the epiphysis.

"Among subsidiary ills, we note an erythema nodosum which sometimes occurs as a part of a syndrome which consists of polymorphic skin lesions, hyperemia, edema, and hemorrhage frequently associated with arthritis. There may be visceral crises, especially gastro-intestinal, endocarditis, hematuria, and peliosis rheumatica.

"You also have an accompanying iridocyclitis due to infection, anaphylaxis or faulty metabolism."

After this gas attack from a big gun, Jane felt for a moment that her autopsy was at hand. But only for a moment, for in imagination she could hear the sound of other bursting shells, and the tramp of English

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soldiers, far away on Flanders' field, pressing onward to the foe, and above it all from gas-choked throats came their slogan, "Cheero!" It went echoing and re-echoing along the lines, and again and again she heard "Cheero!" This was a time for courage.

Jane's British-American blood ran hot. She thought of Ypres, and Courcellette and Vimy Ridge, where her countrymen pushed through gas to glory, and she thought of her brave young American brothers winning their spurs on the West Front, and helping so valiantly to save the world, and she said "Who am I to yield?" Then back to the clinicians entrenched behind polysyllables came Jane's counter attack, "Life is more than edema, and the body than cholecystitis. Neither saprophytic bacteria, nor streptococci, nor staphylococci nor fusiform anaërobes, nor anything else that is pathogenic can ever touch the human spirit, or blot the image of the Eternal from the human heart. 'Cheero'!"

Jane is now a professional invalid; formerly she was only an amateur. It is not the profession she would have selected for herself, but since it was thrust upon her she says she would like to adorn it. Speaking of adornment, Jane never took kindly to the habiliments of invalidism. Be-ribboned and be-flowered caps and negligées made no lasting appeal. She says that for the last word in desirable attire, she would select rubbers and raincoat, with a folding umbrella in the pocket. This, however, is not a costume that has gained much popularity with the bed-ridden. In

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her palmy days, Jane always delighted in cloudy skies and pattering rain. Perhaps that is the reason she has been able to withstand so well the deluge of misfortune that came with each relapse. By all the rules of rheumatism of course she should hate the rain as if it were a Prussian Junker, but Jane never did learn the rules of the game. It may be as well so, since she will still have that pleasure in store when she is through relapsing.

Doctors have a peculiar way of dealing with a relapser, Jane found. Whenever any new condition appears, they order the patient to buy something. In this way, Jane has, during the last two years, acquired enough apparatus of one kind or another to stock a reconstruction hospital. She has electrical appliances galore; bakers and therapeutic lamps, braces and splints, elastic bandages and knee supports, rolls and pillows, and the whole fraternity of air cushions and book-rests and adjustable writing tables, not to mention many inconspicuous and less bulky contraptions. Jane said she had elaborate plans, at one time, for selling these things, but she discovered later that it was not possible even to give them away. The best she has ever been able to do was to lend one of them for a short time. It is impossible to lose them. Of course Jane does not buy hospital supplies now. It is not necessary; she has them all. The possession of these things helps to make Jane's journeyings from place to place more or less spectacular. And Jane did journey during her relapses. Once they carried

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her from wintry cold to a sunny clime, but the trip proved her complete undoing. The pneumococcus followed her and joined forces with the streptococcus in a fight that was well-nigh fatal to Jane. And while she was hovering around the border land, knowing nothing of the happenings of life, her beautiful and beloved mother far away slipped without warning through the black shadows, and into the dawn, leaving the world a desolate place for Jane. But oh! the wonderful memories!

Weary weeks of suffering were followed by partial recovery, and Jane finally returned to Gomorrah, where she was again under the care of her doctors. She says she had to work very hard at this time to keep up their interest. She thought they felt like the elevator man at the hospital whose greeting was: "I never expected to see you back here alive."

Of course it is an affront to a doctor for a patient to keep on getting worse after he had said she was well. But what can the poor patient do about it? Jane would gladly have been more polite, but the disease she entertains is so rude, and no wonder since it has associated with all sorts and conditions of men for centuries.

However, Jane's time of freedom was at hand. With the entrance of the United States into the war, all her doctors—and she had a whole battalion—rushed headlong into the army. Jane had many doctors, not from choice, but because treating by syndicate is the modern way. The method commends itself to the

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profession on account of the difficulty it presents for fixing blame when the casualty lists come in. But, be this as it may, her doctors are all serving their country now as captains and majors abroad, behind the lines, in the cantonments, as advisers to the government, and as leaders of commissions to far-away lands. They are a busy lot, and Jane is sure they will be very successful since their patients are all able-bodied men. Taking care of sick people must be stupid work, especially when they haven't the wit to get well.

Jane, too, was obsessed with a desire to do war work. It seemed to her that all the women in the world except herself were singing the song of "knit two, purl two," and almost losing their minds over the Kitchener toe. Naturally she wanted to lose her mind over something, too, but since she could not find a task suited to her disability, she decided to appeal once more to Dr. Great Man. He had helped her in other emergencies, and he might in this. In order to get his attention she sent him the following letter, which is hardly in regulation letter form, but her disease does not run true to form either :

*Oh! great and honored and
Honorable Colonel Great Man
Of the State Council of Defense,
General adviser to the nation,
And practitioner of medicine
On the side—*

"Cheero!"

*Hear my wail of discontent.
Anxious am I to serve my country,
But unable because of grievous illness
For which there seems no balm
In Gilead or elsewhere.
Have you no plan
For mobilizing derelicts?
Must I sit suffering in my chair forever
When I would fain fare forth
To slay Germans, or surgeons,
Or any other pirates
That prey upon the world?
My mind is tethered to my tortured body,
And cannot forge ahead.
For many moons
Have I endured torments
That make purgatory
Seem a veritable paradise
By comparison.
Tears well up in my eyes,
Sobs shake my soul,
When I consider that I cannot enlist
Under the Y.W.C.A., the Red Cross,
Or any other banner.
You must admit, Oh, Colonel,
That I have had a raw deal,
And should not be expected
To contemplate
My condition with calmness.
Forgive me if I say that in case of future ills,*

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*I would rather trust my body
To a plumber
Than to a surgeon.
No hope lies ahead
Unless you can point a way
For me to serve my country.*

*In similar straits, the tortured, muddled male
Would find his emotional expression
In profanity.
No such soul surcease is mine.
With all the woman's inhibitions,
There is naught but vers libre.
Take thou the dose.
Help! Oh, Colonel! Help!*

She got an immediate reply which was "Thank God, I am not a surgeon. Keep your spirits up and victory will be yours." She filed away for future reference this eminently practical suggestion which any janitor might have given her, and stopped sending appeals for help to her doctors. She commenced sending them socks!

With her physicians in the army, Jane decided that it was the privilege of civilians to prescribe for themselves. And she is getting better! Jane had altogether a motley array of doctors, over fifty in all, and she says that every living one—this does not include a few dead ones—at some time or other, told her a story with variations about an old woman who had

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only two teeth but was thankful they hit. Even several strange doctors called in hurriedly in different emergencies told it. So general is its use that Jane thinks it is and ever has been offered as a special course in all the important medical schools. It is heard in the North, the South, the East, and the West, from young men as well as old, and, she says, that only once did she manage to tell it first. This seemed a mean advantage to take of an unsuspecting medic with his best bed-side manner on all ready for the big drive! Jane says she first heard the story when she was teething—that is before she cut her eye teeth, and she never wants to hear it again even if she should live to be as old as Methuselah. She is probably safe from attack now since she is her own physician and calls no one in consultation.

During her period of relapsing, Jane tried everything from radium to Christian and un-Christian Science, and from Osteopathy to herbs, down one way and up the other, and sometimes all together. It was an exhilarating sport, but Jane abandoned it as profitless and took up some war work which proved much more stimulating as well as more sensible. She is now urging every one she knows to get all the girls in the country organized into Patriotic Leagues. She says every invalid can help along this way, and the world will be a better one for the effort. It has knitting beaten to a frazzle. Factories can turn out socks, but no factory on earth can turn out Patriotic Leaguers three hundred thousand strong who have signed this

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pledge: "I pledge to express my patriotism by doing better than ever before whatever work I have to do ; by rendering whatever special service I can at this time to my community and country ; by living up to the highest standards of character and honor and by helping others to do the same." Jane says we must work for a million members. She is even enthusiastic about urging all invalids regardless of handicaps to sign. Patriotic Leagues must be promoted. The work is infinitely more interesting than pursuing a personal cure which in the end leads but to the grave.

Jane is nothing if not patriotic. She is determined to help win the war. She registered in the woman's registration because she wished to be ready to answer her country's call, if it ever became necessary to mobilize the unfit. She says she could at least tell the government what not to do for rheumatism.

Jane has passed through many new experiences since she commenced to relapse, and she carries along pleasant memories of doctors who took themselves seriously, thereby contributing to the gaiety of invalids, of friends who constantly told her of remedies that would cure her, and of faithful attendants who helped to lessen the miseries of disability. She has had all kinds of nurses, but she remembers particularly the golden-haired angel who watched over her for months, and who is now serving on the battle-fields "over there" where Jane would like to be.

Jane wants an army commission for her and all the other brave "nursing sisters" who have enlisted for

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service overseas. She says long illness must have infected her reasoning powers, because she is unable to understand why doctors have commissions, and nurses have not.

Jane also recalls with pleasure memories of the faithful colored attendant to whom her wee nephew put the question "Why do you be colored?" Her reply, "God made me that way," gave him pause for a moment, but he rallied, and, placing himself unconditionally among the higher critics, commented, "He's a funny man to do that."

And she will always remember the lassie who was constantly prescribing for her, and who, when Jane offered a weary protest, replied: "I cannot help it; it is my nature. I have doctor's blood in my veins. My father, my grandfather and my uncle were veterinaries!"

Jane has another warm spot in her heart, and that is reserved for the dark-eyed girl who for more than a year has been her nurse, companion and friend.

Jane is in fine fettle now. She is on a Win-the-War diet, and says she expects soon to be a hale and hearty invalid able to direct a hostess house at an army camp. She says relapses are not so bad—when you are through with them, and can look out to the future with hope. She has achieved peace without victory, but she knows the world will sometime be made unsafe for arthritis, if not it will be unsafe for doctors. In the meantime, even the humblest invalid

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can help in some way or other to make it safe for democracy.

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR RHEUMATISM

1. **R** Search the country for a doctor who knows something about the disease—there isn't any such animal—and stick to him like a porous plaster.

—*Experience.*

2. **R** Flee from nostrums as from the wrath of God—lame joints permitting.

—*Wisdom.*

3. **R** Keep a stiff upper lip—stiff joints will take care of themselves.

—*Optimism.*

